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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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Jei-Wei Chang

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EXAMINER

CHACKO DAVIS, DABORAH

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1756

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05/04/2007

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/714,305	Applicant(s) CHANG ET AL.	
	Examiner Daborah Chacko-Davis	Art Unit 1756	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on February 15, 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9 and 32-35 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-9, 32-35 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 7, and 9, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 7, at lines 1-3, recites "exposing said photoresist pattern to ozone further comprises placing the wafer in an ozone chamber, heating them to between 70 and 150% C". Claim 9, at line 3, recites "at a temperature between 50 and 90%C". The recitation of a temperature range between 70 and 150%C and a temperature range between 50 and 90%C is not clear. Temperature, in the centigrade or celsius scale, is expressed as "°C" and not "%C". Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 32, 34-35, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U. S. Patent No. 4,904,619 (Yamada et al., hereinafter referred to as Yamada).

Yamada, in col 3, lines 29-64, in col 4, lines 63-68, in col 5, lines 1-13, and figure

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1(a) through figure 1(d), discloses a photoresist pattern suitable for liftoff, having sidewalls and an upper surface (see reference 15), performing an ion beam irradiation so as to cause hardening of the resist surface on the top portion (upper surface hardened) of the resist pattern that is resistant to chemical attack (i.e., the ion beam irradiation or sputter cleaning is too weak to etch the resist pattern surface), such that the bottom portion (shadowed region) of the resist pattern remains unhardened, exposing the resist pattern to oxidation using plasma ashing (for 5 minutes) resulting in the under cut of the photoresist pattern (unhardened bottom portion of the resist pattern eroded), wherein the top portion of the resist pattern (upper portion) overhangs the bottom shrunk portion (i.e., the bottom part of the resist pattern is thinned), removing the shrunk bottom portion of the photoresist resulting in a lift-off of the material that is deposited on the resist pattern (claim 32). Yamada, in col 5, lines 1-16, discloses that the ion beam is impinged on the resist pattern for about 3 minutes, and the top hardened layer of the resist pattern extends to about 50nm (claim 34). Yamada, in col 5, lines 10-12, discloses that the hardened layer (unetched overhang) overhangs the shrunk bottom resist by about 0.1 μ (bottom 200nm shorter than the top width) on each side (claim 35).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

5. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

6. Claims 1-2, 5-6, and 8, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 4,904,619 (Yamada et al., hereinafter referred to as Yamada) in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,833,234 (Bloomstein et al., hereinafter referred to as Bloomstein).

Yamada, in col 3, lines 29-64, in col 4, lines 63-68, in col 5, lines 1-13, and figure 1(a) through figure 1(d), discloses a photoresist pattern, and a liftoff method comprising forming a resist pattern (i.e., a photoresist layer is formed on the substrate or electrode layer, exposed and developed the photoresist layer to form a resist pattern) having sidewalls and an upper surface (see reference 15), performing an ion beam irradiation so as to cause hardening of the resist surface on the top portion (upper surface hardened) of the resist pattern that is resistant to chemical attack (i.e., the ion beam irradiation or sputter cleaning is too weak to etch the resist pattern surface), such that the bottom portion (shadowed region) of the resist pattern remains unhardened, exposing the resist pattern to oxidation using plasma ashing (for 5 minutes) resulting in the under cut of the photoresist pattern (unhardened bottom portion of the resist pattern eroded), wherein the top portion of the resist pattern (upper portion) overhangs the bottom shrunk portion (i.e., the bottom part of the resist pattern is thinned), forming a layer (depositing) of thin film over the resist pattern (and all exposed surfaces, i.e., all horizontal surfaces) at a thickness less than that of the bottom under cut portion (unhardened photoresist layer), removing the shrunk bottom portion of the photoresist

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resulting in a lift-off of the material that is deposited on the resist pattern (claim 1).

Yamada, in col 4, lines 36-37, discloses that the resist is a positive resist (claim 2).

Yamada, in col 5, lines 1-16, discloses that the ion beam is impinged on the resist pattern for about 3 minutes, and the top hardened layer of the resist pattern extends to about 50nm (claims 5-6). Yamada, in col 5, lines 10-12, discloses that the hardened layer (unetched overhang) overhangs the shrunk bottom resist by about 0.1 μ (bottom 200nm shorter than the top width) on each side (claim 8). Yamada, in col 5, lines 60-63, discloses that the unhardened photoresist layer (resist pattern with the undercut portion) is removed by treating the resist with the developer.

The difference between the claims and Yamada is that Yamada does not disclose exposing the resist pattern to ozone.

Bloomstein, in col 11, lines 60-67, in col 12, lines 1-7, discloses performing an ozone exposure process after exposing the resist.

Therefore it would be obvious to a skilled artisan to modify Yamada by replacing the oxygen plasma ashing with an ozone oxidation step as suggested by Bloomstein because Bloomstein, in col 14, lines 1-7, discloses that the resist surface treatment can be performed by either ozone treatment or oxygen plasma treatment, and Bloomstein, in col 19, lines 30-40, discloses that treatment with ozone as claimed increases the hydrophilicity of the surface of the resist, and increases the surface energy of the polymers in order to promote adhesion.

7. Claim 3, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 4,904,619 (Yamada et al., hereinafter referred to as Yamada) in view of U.

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S. Patent No. 6,833,234 (Bloomstein et al., hereinafter referred to as Bloomstein) as applied to claims 1-2, 5-6, 8, 32, 34-35 above, and further in view of U. S. Patent no. 6,383,944 (Furihata et al., hereinafter referred to as Furihata).

Yamada in view of Bloomstein is discussed in paragraph no. 6.

The difference between the claims and Yamada in view of Bloomstein is that Yamada in view of Bloomstein does not disclose that the photoresist layer thickness is between about 0.1 and 0.4 microns (claim 3).

Furihata, in col 2, lines 28-36, discloses that the resist layer thickness in the lift-off resist pattern is about 0.5 μ .

Therefore it would be obvious to a skilled artisan to modify Yamada in view of Bloomstein by employing the resist thickness suggested by Furihata because Furihata, in col 2, lines 40-49, discloses that if the thickness range is beyond the range suggested the lift-off resist pattern would be less smooth to lift off.

8. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 4,904,619 (Yamada et al., hereinafter referred to as Yamada) in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,833,234 (Bloomstein et al., hereinafter referred to as Bloomstein) as applied to claims 1-2, 5-6, 8, 32, 34-35 above, and further in view of U. S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0018742 (He et al., hereinafter referred to as He).

Yamada in view of Bloomstein is discussed in paragraph no. 6.

The difference between the claims and Yamada in view of Bloomstein is that Yamada in view of Bloomstein does not disclose that the ion beam has an energy between about 50 and 200 volts (claim 4).

He, in paragraph no. [0052], discloses that the resist pattern (image 110, see figure 4B and 4C) is exposed to an ion beam irradiation at about 100 volts.

Therefore, it would be obvious to a skilled artisan to modify Yamada in view of Bloomstein to expose the photoresist pattern to an ion beam of the claimed energy because He in [0052], teaches that exposing the image (resist pattern, 110) to ions at the claimed energy results in a thicker etch-resistant layer (i.e., thicker hardened layer) at its tops surface due to enabling the ion radicals to penetrate deeper into the image layer (without etching the image layer, see figure 4B, 4C).

9. Claim 7, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 4,904,619 (Yamada et al., hereinafter referred to as Yamada) in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,833,234 (Bloomstein et al., hereinafter referred to as Bloomstein) as applied to claims 1-2, 5-6, 8, 32, 34-35, above, and further in view of U. S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0001957 (Kim et al., hereinafter referred to as Kim).

Yamada in view of Bloomstein is discussed in paragraph no. 6.

Bloomstein, in col 12, lines 1-7, in col 15, lines 40-45, in col 24, lines 25-52, and in figure 6B, discloses using the ozone concentration of about 1-2 volume percent (i.e., 10 to 20 gm/m³), and correspondingly the claimed flow rate as recited for performing the ozone exposure for at least a minute.

The difference between the claims and Yamada in view of Bloomstein is that Yamada in view of Bloomstein does not disclose that the photoresist pattern is exposed to the ozone atmosphere in an ozone chamber while being heated at a temperature of about 70-150°C.

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Kim, in paragraph no. [0022], discloses that the temperature in the ozone asher (ozone chamber) is maintained at a low temperature of at least 130°C during the ozone ashing treatment of the photoresist pattern.

Therefore it would be obvious to a skilled artisan to modify Yamada in view of Bloomstein by employing the method of using the claimed temperature range during the ozone treatment of the photoresist pattern as suggested by Kim because Kim, in [0022], discloses that maintaining the ozone asher at the claimed low temperature range enables the ashing of the photoresist pattern at a low etch rate such that the width of the photoresist pattern can be made fine without causing the pattern to fall down.

10. Claim 9, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 4,904,619 (Yamada et al., hereinafter referred to as Yamada) in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,833,234 (Bloomstein et al., hereinafter referred to as Bloomstein) as applied to claims 1-2, 4-8, 32, 34-35 above, and further in view of U. S. Patent No. 5,512,334 (Leuschner et al., hereinafter referred to as Leuschner).

Yamada in view of Bloomstein is discussed in paragraph no. 6.

Bloomstein, in col 23, lines 38-65, in col 24, lines 25-45, discloses that the resist is developed at the claimed temperature range the PAB temperature is maintained, and developing time (see figure 10).

The difference between the claims and Yamada in view of Bloomstein is that Yamada in view of Bloomstein does not disclose using an NMP as the developer.

Leuschner, in col 2, lines 31-34, and in col 3, lines 20-25, discloses that the lift-off resist is heated and developed by means of N-methyl pyrrolidone (NMP).

Therefore, it would be obvious to a skilled artisan to modify Yamada in view of Bloomstein by employing the developer and developing process suggested by Leuschner because Leuschner, in col 2, lines 30-31, discloses that heating the resist enables the removal of the resist with the claimed developer, and Leuschner in col 3, lines 20-24, discloses the bottom portion of the resist together with the top hardened portion of the resist can be dissolved with a non-toxic organic solvent such as NMP.

11. Claim 33, is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U. S. Patent No. 4,904,619 (Yamada et al., hereinafter referred to as Yamada) in view of U. S. Patent no. 6,383,944 (Furihata et al., hereinafter referred to as Furihata).

Yamada is discussed in paragraph no. 4.

The difference between the claims and Yamada is that Yamada does not disclose that the photoresist layer thickness is between about 0.1 and 0.4 microns (claim 33).

Furihata, in col 2, lines 28-36, discloses that the resist layer thickness in the lift-off resist pattern is about 0.5 μ .

Therefore it would be obvious to a skilled artisan to modify Yamada by employing the resist thickness suggested by Furihata because Furihata, in col 2, lines 40-49, discloses that if the thickness range is beyond the range suggested the lift-off resist pattern would be less smooth to lift off.

Response to Arguments

12. Applicant's arguments filed February 15, 2007, have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. The 103 rejections made in the previous office action (paper no. 0515) are maintained.

A) Applicants argue that Yamada does not teach exposing the photoresist layer to an ion beam such that the energy of the ion beam is too low to sputter the photoresist layer.

Yamada, in col 5, lines 1-12, discloses irradiating with a sputter ion beam at the claimed energy level to harden the surface of the photoresist. Yamada does not teach sputtering the photoresist layer. Additionally, Yamada teaches performing a sputter cleaning followed by a plasma ashing in an oxygen gas atmosphere in order to reduce the bottom width i.e., the sputter clean process is not strong enough to cause a considerable sputter etching.

B) Applicants argue that Yamada does not teach an ion beam of the claimed voltage.

Yamada, in col 5, lines 1-3, discloses that the photoresist surface is subjected to a sputter ion beam exposure with an RF power of about 20W. However, He is depended upon to disclose the claimed ion beam energy of about 100volts. See paragraph no.

C) Applicants argue that Bloomstein does not teach a change in dimension in the resist exposed to ozone.

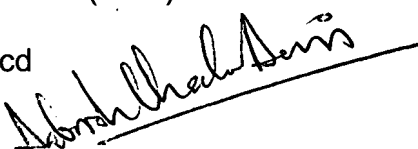
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Bloomstein is not depended upon to show a change in dimension in the photoresist. Bloomstein is depended upon to show the interchangeability of photoresist exposure to either an ozone treatment or an oxygen plasma treatment. Additionally, as discussed in paragraph A), Yamada teaches that the resist pattern width of the bottom portion is considerably shrunk after the plasma ashing process in the oxygen atmosphere.

Conclusion

13. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Daborah Chacko-Davis whose telephone number is (571) 272-1380. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9:30 - 6:00. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mark F Huff can be reached on (571) 272-1385. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (571) 273-8300. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

dcd


April 28, 2007.